

IS HISTORY A THING OF THE PAST?
The Roots of Present Global Issues
by Dr. Robert Moore

"But it does move all the same". Those are celebrated words uttered by a celebrated scientist under very difficult conditions. Galileo had been ordered by the Holy Roman Inquisition to retract his conclusion that the earth went around the sun: when he withdrew his own retraction he challenged what was, for the churchmen, infallible dogmatic truth. Behind the theological position stood a vast bureaucracy - in those days called a hierarchy - devoted, literally by soul and body, to a wrong belief about the relationship between the sun and the earth. It was not dogma alone they were upholding: the whole system, their livelihood, their credibility, and their power was based upon this erroneous assumption. To admit that Galileo was right meant that this bureaucracy would have to adjust to something entirely new; it was much less palatable to adjust than to abjure.

Bureaucracies have become the stalking horses of the modern world. The modern nation state has had to create increasingly large ones to perform its increasingly complex functions. Bureaucracies proliferate; so do fears about their power in almost every society. In some societies these fears are expressed openly, in others they are rigorously repressed. But the central point remains true: there is concern about them - their power, their size, their influence and the resources they absorb. Most bureaucracies are self-preserving and self-enlarging institutions. If they encounter an idea or a development which appears to threaten the chosen basis of their existence and power they are likely to suppress it, reject it, strangle it by putting it to a slow death through their intricate mills.

The incident of Galileo and the Roman Inquisition is not simply a single experience that is behind us, but a continuous experience in our relationship with large institutions

which may have begun as administrations of renewal but have become curators of precedent.(1)

Galileo's relationship to the Roman Curia, therefore, is part of our own present experience. That is precisely the point of teaching history, to foster the recognition of relevant experience.

There are two different ways of approaching experience, whether of individuals, communities or nations. The first is to treat experience as implicit, which is to say that although certain historical challenges have been met and certain solutions arrived at, these are not seriously discussed and analysed but left to seep into the conscious collective mind from the unconscious one. From this kind of experience, people usually react to events without quite knowing why they have reacted in a particular way. They cannot handle eventualities, new developments, new problems on a level of positive reasoning but often on a level of either collective hysteria or - which is really a form of the same thing - collective dogmatism. The other approach to experience is to make it explicit, and this is precisely where the teaching of history is of seminal importance to our young people. To be able to reflect on the meaning of Galileo's relationship with the Inquisition is to be able to understand the fundamental and conscious principle inherent in the relationship between ideas and structures. This gives students a handle on institutionalized power and the way it reacts to events. It helps them to understand their own attitude towards the stimulus of change, their own reactions toward ideas that have come from other places or peoples

(1). Of course there are notable exceptions - and students should be made aware of them. The bureaucracies which administered the reform of English social conditions in the 19th century were models of flexibility and were largely free from the temptations to turn themselves into coagulations of protective self-esteem. Recognizing these exceptions, and trying to find out why they were different, is one of the great satisfactions of learning history for the young as well as the adult.

and the nature of vested interests as against that of the apologists of reform or revision. In a world like our own, where we balance carefully between change as threat and change as growth, this kind of awareness is very important. It is really explicit experience condensed in historical memory: memory that is reflected upon, analysed, discussed and consciously distilled into the institutions that attempt to create awareness and consciousness among peoples.

Galileo's story has yet another dimension that is important to today's world. Because the Roman Inquisition, in forcing Galileo to retract created a climate inimical to scientific inquiry, the Mediterranean and Roman Catholic peoples of Europe lost the opportunity to become major progenitors of the scientific revolution. Galileo was an Italian. He belonged to a community of serious and staggeringly talented scientific observers. But the locus of the scientific revolution shifted to the northern countries of Europe, countries in which the Protestant religion was predominant but in which bureaucracies of churchmen, though powerful, were neither ineffable nor infallible. And, consequently, a whole vital spectrum of experience was lost to the peoples of Roman Catholic Europe until well into the 19th century.

That, too, if it is treated as experience, has meaning and relevance for the world in which we live. That world, as everybody admits (by way of universal cliché), is a world of change: it is also increasingly a multi-polar world in which there are shifts in the magnetic fields of power. Bureaucracies, makers of policy, advisors of governments which lock themselves into formulations based on power structures, are unlikely to be able to cope with these changes as long as they refuse to recognize them as fundamental. Because they do not use their history as experience they become trapped in the immediate past as if in a freeze. Hence those who do not understand history are condemned to repeat it.

Experience reflected upon, therefore, is a very important objective in the teaching of history. That must mean that merely to position an event in the context of its time is not a sufficient objective for a history teacher. Inevitably a good teacher sets the happening in relation to the

ideas and structures of the age in which it happens. But he or she does not stop there. Having shown what an event means in terms of contemporary thinking and reaction, how it affected the people on whom it fell, it is important to draw out of it its central core of meaning. That, as in the Galileo story, is not simply the conflict between science and religion as it appears on the surface but more crucially the problem of the relationship between novel ideas and vested interests, between the power of inertia and the momentum of discovery.

Once a teacher has grasped the essential significance of an event in terms of the principle of human behaviour it exemplifies, it is possible to relate that principle to the structures of the modern world and use history as a way of opening students' eyes to a deeper and broader meaning of present day disputes. So, at least, when later on students have to make personal decisions about how to approach structures of power and where to give their loyalties and allegiance, they will have some consciousness of what is involved in making complex decisions.

All of this is really a prelude to saying that one of the functions of history in the classroom is to endow students with a capacity for interpretation of the events that are taking place around them.

Every age has periods of perplexity. Every age has assumed that the problems it faces are, if not the most horrendous, at least the most fundamental. With that qualification in mind it is still true to say that the late 20th century is a particularly significant period in the experience of mankind, significant because modern communications have brought all peoples and nations into each other's backyards. What happens in Tokyo or Beijing, or Managua or St. George's, Grenada, let alone Moscow or Prague or London or Washington, or Ottawa, has profound and almost immediate effects right around the world. Furthermore, closeness does not usually create camaraderie. The reverse is more often true: proximity spells punacity. As peoples move into each other's backyards they carry their respective pasts with them. Their history influences their behaviour as much as

their nearness to one another does. Hence the increasing complexity of our age and the perplexity with which vast numbers of citizens are afflicted.

Part of a history teacher's duty is to help students to grapple with that perplexity. But in so doing the teacher should not attempt to provide them with pre-determined answers to problems raised by contemporary developments. More certainly, the teacher's function is to help the students acquire tools of interpretation with which to approach contemporary events and to set these events within reasonably understandable contexts.

This is particularly important because of the pervasiveness of the electronic media in societies like Canada. For instance: the recent events in Ethiopia are in everybody's living room and they have produced instantaneous reactions amongst Canadians. All to the good. But what is surely more important is that the problems of Ethiopia be set in a framework - in context with the problems of malnutrition and hunger related to a number of important factors that have been operating on the African continent for well over two decades now. For instance, not many observers on the media are telling us that part of the reason for the present suffering is the policies of Hailie Selassie's imperial government: the despoilation of the peasantry in favour of the aristocracy; the pillaging of the small farmers in favour of the towns; and the appropriation of peasant lands to enlarge imperial holdings which were left largely untilld. Two factors explain this omission, one historical, the other ideological. The first factor is the principle of compensation. When Hailie Selassie's country was overrun by Mussolini's in 1935, no Western nation stirred in his defence - except by pious bleat. His restoration by the allied armies during World War II was construed as an act of belated justice. Consequently, the emperor's blatant misrule was largely considered the pardonable eccentricity of a pre-modern potentate - unpalatable but not damnable. The second factor was critical to the East-West equation. The emperor was impeccably pro-western. That more than atoned for his culpable exploitation of his loyal subjects.

All this is important - but it is still not the core of the matter. A much more fundamental issue is raised by the drought in large parts of Africa - which makes Ethiopia's misery the most hideously vivid expression of wider problems. This brings me back to the second major objective of the teaching of history: discerning the meaning of contemporary phenomena. To discern means to see the essential beneath the ephemeral. It means examining a situation to decipher how it reveals the structure of the world or part of it; the strengths of the structure or strains that structure is bearing; the menaces it is facing; whether it is showing signs of consolidation or collapse. In short, it is a way of answering the question: what does this event really signify, and for whom?

Now, one of the facts that the Ethiopian disaster signifies is that water is becoming an acute problem in our planetary civilization - a highly symptomatic problem heavy with far-reaching implications. For whom? For us all.

This is the moment for a history teacher to turn the student's attention to previous civilizations to explore the relationship between their vitality and their water supply. As a point of departure the student may be presented with a bold proposition to investigate. For instance: whenever the availability or the quality of water becomes a problem in a given civilization, that civilization surely has reached a point of crisis.

A survey of a range of civilizations can then be brought to bear on this particular act of discernment. When, for instance, Athens and Sparta were at war, the Athenians were eventually defeated because Athens ran out of pure uncontaminated water and its citizens were decimated by disease. Some students would have learned, probably in earlier grades, about the great civilization of the Pharaohs, and particularly the one essential continuous ingredient in Egyptian civilization, the achievement of soil fertility by the irrigation system of the Nile. But when it is pointed out that whenever the great Egyptian civilizations faltered and finally failed, the signs of their faltering and failing were the neglect of the canals, then it becomes clear how important is the relationship

between a healthy civilization and a healthy water supply.

A teacher can then go on to point out that those masters of induced soil fertility, the Arabs, having come out of arid Arabia, set up civilizations all along the Mediterranean, as well as what we now know as the Middle East, and in India, based upon an uninterrupted supply of pure water. Spain, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, India, all show the marks of Islamic culture in the way water is handled and fertility invoked. But whenever Islamic civilizations started to crumble, the first sign was the disrepair of the irrigation systems. And wherever they faltered and failed the harbingers of decline were the neglect of the elaborate waterways. In Chinese civilization, whenever the great dynasties lost control of the Chinese river system, the waterways of China became viaducts of trouble, uncontrollable, contaminated, even changing their courses.

Then the teacher can point to the fact that in many parts of the modern world the pollutants with which industrialized civilization has infected our waters are rendering them unfit for human consumption; that whole towns in North America have to move from areas near to water because they can no longer use it; that acid rain has become a point of contention and controversy between the United States and Canada; and that now it's always safer to drink bottled water in the great cities of Europe than water that comes through the pipes; that in the megalopoli of the Third World, like Mexico City, Lagos, Jakarta, access to water is becoming more and more tenuous for more and more people, and increasing desertification is the plague of Africa.

All this suggests that one of the symptoms of a civilization in crisis has now become widespread in the modern world. This, in turn, implies that we have to look at the way we have ordered our civilization so as to discern where we have gone wrong; factors we should more closely take into consideration; and what international controls we should be exercising over the use of water, indeed, over the way we treat our natural environment.

That is only one example of the art of discernment. It does involve a considerable range of comparative historical knowledge on the part of the teacher. It also implies that the curriculum has a cumulative effect: if students learn of various civilizations in the junior grades teachers at senior levels can build on this earlier acquisition to create patterns to enable students to practice the art of discernment. This will certainly have the effect of increasing the interest in the subject - stimulating debate among the students as to what is discernible and what is not. It creates a healthy, exploratory atmosphere and excites the students to research, for it starts with a modern phenomenon and then invokes the experience of other eras to make that phenomenon manageable for interpretation.

The practice of discerning may make both teachers and students interested in the problem posed by the rise and fall of great civilizations in the past. A subject intrinsically fascinating to those who are already committed to history, it becomes meaningful to students as they themselves are daily presented with news items which indicate the fragility of our own civilization in the face of nuclear competition. This can be an excellent opportunity for teachers to deal with, for instance, the rise and decline of Greek civilization, the Roman Empire, or - even further back - the rise and decline of the great Egyptian and Babylonian civilizations, or of the great Chinese civilizations. The point is twofold: ancient civilizations exercise a fascination over young people which is due to their distance, their apparent mystery and, what looks like their "exotic" details. But the second thing is that these civilizations carry messages for our own. Since they are areas of human endeavour into which a great deal of human genius, talent and imagination were put, the study of older cultures becomes part of the key to the interpretation of the modern world and as such combines two important elements in good teaching: fascination and increasing intelligibility.

In the course of the discussion on discernment, I implied the word "perspective". This, too, is a vital ingredient in history teaching, for it implies getting things into some kind of mental proportion; putting a distance - the distance of

detachment - between oneself and a number of phenomena which daily impinge upon one's experience. That kind of perspective or detachment is crucial if we are going to educate young people into looking more dispassionately and less emotionally at the phenomena that appear before their eyes every day and night on the media. To look dispassionately at something implies trying to put analysis before adulation or apoplexy. This is not to say that the teaching of history will lead to a bloodless, cold generation of young people who are incapable of putting passion into their beliefs and convictions. But it does mean that the teaching of history can help young people to approach daily events with enough detachment to decide with some balance what attitude they should take towards them, and then to endow their decisions with enough passion to give them vitality and imagination.

Every history teacher is bound to recognise the division, the ominous division, between "East" and "West" (the shorthand words, of course, for communist and non-communist), that is part of the furniture of the modern world. The signs of the times at the moment suggest that these divisions are being deepened - exacerbated - by the increasing fear and suspicion which the two super powers harbour for each other. We are daily encouraged, as people belonging to one side, to see our opponents as merchants of mendacity, demons of darkness, devils incarnate. And, of course, behind all that stands the menace of the mushroom cloud and the nuclear winter which, if it does not end the civilization of our planet, will certainly reduce it to a civilization of the diseased.

It is important that at some point in their school careers students be encouraged to develop a healthy detachment about this "East -West" altercation. For three reasons: first, that they do not harbour a fatalistic attitude towards it; second, that they recognize that mankind has been through "irreconcilable conflicts" before and worked out tolerable solutions; and third, that they see themselves as taking part in the process by which solutions are achieved. In this connection it will be useful for history teachers to expose their students to, for instance, the rancour of the Reformation in Europe: two centuries of explosive human intolerance. Students will be

quick to observe intriguing parallels between the Catholic/ Calvinist competition and our own capitalist-communist tug of war.

The study of the Reformation is essentially a study of conflict between two mutually intolerant, differing conceptions of God, humankind, their relationships to the world and to each other, ironically set within the framework of Christian thinking and tradition. A study of our "East-West" stand-off is a study of combat between two views of the world, of humankind, the relationship between classes in society and the relationship between peoples and power, power and history: the proponents of these two world views regard them as mutually incompatible. In the first case, the quarrel was between theologies; in the second case between ideologies. In both cases the human reaction has been notorious for odium, venom, life-destroying competitiveness, intense propaganda, widespread espionage, treachery, and blazing missionary zeal. To look at Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries is to look at a continent which saw itself as a battleground between the forces of light and the forces of darkness for the possession of the human spirit: a battleground which called forth immense resources of statecraft and immense human ingenuity. Students who are led to take a good look at the Reformation in the light of recent "East-West" sayings and doings, might quickly acquire a strong sense of deja vu. Fine. For teachers can then bring them to the point in the Reformation story where statesmen, tired of the politics of God, demoted them in favour of the much more manageable politics of humans; and Europe settled for plurality of differing dogmatisms kept by unfanatic minds from turning their holy bile into the apocalypse.

Such teaching, provided it is done with sensitivity to students' religious or ideological biases, could make a respectable contribution towards encouraging in our youth a pragmatic - as opposed to dogmatic or even tragic - approach to the quarrel between today's superpowers. A caveat: no teacher should give the impression that perspective erodes convictions but rather that it restrains the temptation to act on convictions intemperately.

A sense of perspective could serve another useful function which is to bring under critical scrutiny the dangerous assumption that nuclear war is inevitable. That assumption is popular with certain circles in both super powers, in Europe and elsewhere. It also affects the thinking of sizeable numbers of ordinary citizens across the globe. It unquestionably needs to be exorcised from the minds of the next generation. To help do this an analysis of the psychological attitudes that prevailed among the ruling classes of the major European powers in the decade before the outbreak of the First World War could be most instructive. For one of the factors historians now agree that made the conflict inevitable was the firm belief among those classes that it had to come. A teacher doing modern European history will of course have pointed out how the nations of Europe formed themselves into two armed camps and piled up their armaments on the assumption that at some point not necessarily predictable but certainly recognizable the conflict would break out. The teacher can then proceed to analyse how that assumption about inevitability turned out to be the most powerful influence in making people accept a feverish arms race and adopt a system of values in which war-fare was considered a virtue. In short, to use modern parlance, they took up positions which excluded the possibility of peaceful solution and did not avail themselves of previous experiences of conflict.

If this kind of awareness is developed in a classroom the teacher can then take it a stage further: to discussions on what we now call "conflict resolution". It could be a productive exercise to have a group of 12th or 13th graders learning about some of the recent theories of conflict resolution, especially what makes it acceptable to policy makers and what attitudes supporting it must exist in the minds of ordinary citizens. It goes without saying that this could encourage stimulating exchanges of opinions among students. Even some highly creative projects could come out of it. All of which would deepen the attachment of students to the study of history because of the areas of research and thought that it opens to them.

Experience, discernment, perspective are all really components of the important art, mentioned previously, of interpret-

ation. That is the crux of the matter. History teaching is essentially a preparation of students for living in their own times. Life, sentient life, is interpretation. But interpretations vary and making an interpretation is never a simple matter. However, the danger of our age is the danger of the simplification of events largely because of the way they are presented on the media. It is very important that history teaching fosters a growing sense of sophistication which precludes making snap, simplistic judgements on situations or peoples.

The electronic media necessarily condenses and simplifies because it deals in minutes, in prime times and top viewing hours. But we cannot read the crises of the eighties solely through the lenses of prime time and the one-liners of a Walter Cronkite and the like. The modern world is too complex for us to be content with the unrounded presentations provided by television newscasting. The awareness of complexity and the whole game of interpretation which complexity requires, has therefore become an even more necessary part of the historical training which our young people must receive.

Interpretation, of course, is not only a matter of historical experience, perspective, and the power of discernment. It also requires another ingredient: perceiving linkages. The history teacher who wishes to use the subject for broadening awareness of our era will sometimes have to go a little beyond the subject in order to equip students with genuinely telling tools of interpretation. For instance, a teacher who is dealing with the phenomenon of Hitler's rise to power could restrict thought to the standard historical interpretations and be content with that. An imaginative teacher, who wishes students to realize that the Hitler phenomenon was not an isolated and peculiar eccentricity of the German people but has universal psychological roots, could uncover a most fertile field of exploration, could encourage, for example, the students to consider whether the concept of the Messiah is not restricted to Judaism and Christianity but is found in politics as well.

For instance, the discussion could concentrate on the sort of political leader who surfaces at times of great crisis in a

people's experience with promises to lead them from egypt of bondage or humiliation to promised lands of power and wealth. Students might find it intellectually invigorating to identify the qualities of such leaders by making comparisons of a number of them. In particular such gifts as the power to mesmerize masses of people, to radiate an aura of power and destiny, to motivate various classes to stunning productivity, and to identify supposed "villains against the people" in their midst.

This can be done with reference to figures of ancient and/or medieval history. But probably more appealing to students, because nearer to contemporary experience, would be a study of Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, Stalin, Peron, Mao Tse Tung. A discussion also of the conditions that lead a people or a nation first to desire, second to expect, and third to identify a messiah is essential here - conditions such as defeat in war, national humiliation, severe economic depression, political chaos, collective despair. An imaginative teacher could even teach his or her students how to stand well-known quotations on their heads: instead of "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely", a teacher could put this one, "powerlessness corrupts and terrifying powerlessness corrupts hypnotically".

But the discussion need not stop there. It can go on to other situations which seem to spawn "political messiahs". One of them comes readily to mind: when a people begin their march out of the psychological incubator of colonialism, they usually look for a powerful figure through whom they can assert their equality with their former colonizers and their unique essence as a people. Since, symbolically, their march to independence is interpreted as a revolt against societies shaped like pyramids in favour of societies shaped like plateaus, they respond most favourably to leaders with qualities noticeably mosaic. An example: Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana actually gave himself the title of "Osagyefo" - the redeemer; had triumphal arches erected to remind Ghanaians of this attribute and ordered that the civic ceremonies of the country, some of them based on religious liturgies, be centred around him. President Mobutu of Zaire is another example of the way in which heads of state, to retain power, often ascribe to themselves qualities which, in a religious context, are reserved for messiahs.

As I hinted, the concept of the messiah is borrowed from religion and mythology, but that does not invalidate its use in the teaching of history. For if history teaching is limited to what is called "purely historical criteria" then the subject loses much of its life blood and is in danger of becoming a pedantic exercise. On the other hand when teachers - using due precautions of course - allow themselves to deploy concepts that although fully developed in other disciplines are part of the fabric of historical experience, then history can become a unifying factor for other specialized fields. In short, the students come to see that the study of history need not be just the study of chronological events or the economic behaviour of masses, or the war-like behaviour of nations, but that it also encompasses ideas of promise, fulfilment, redemption, liberation and the way these ideas work upon peoples and their leaders.

The purpose of interpretation, of course, is not merely academic excellence or intellectual pleasure. The purpose of interpretation is participation in the life and politics of one's own society. That is to say the making of informed and intelligible decisions by individuals who, having been taught history with some imagination at school, can put their decisions into a recognizable historical framework. Making decisions in the modern world, being the complex process it is, involves the consideration of a number of variable factors. One of those considerations is the fact that every society is being forced to take note of and listen to the opinions of other societies. In short, it is in many ways a cross-pollinating world and thus a world which requires the sophisticated art of compromise. Here again, history teachers have an excellent opportunity available to them.

They can show their students that there was a time when the world was so arranged that Great Britain decided how millions of people would behave in certain situations and what they would believe of certain events. That was the period of the Pax Britannica. Later on when the United States became the supreme power in the world, after the Second World War, the Pax Britannica gave way to the Pax Americana. But that is being challenged even now, and as the United States recognized when

it withdrew from Lebanon last year the Pax Americana is not everywhere applicable. If adjustment to the winds of change and to the new configurations of power is a necessity in our time, then those who teach history have a special chance to indicate the dangers of inflexibility among nations, and the inherent advantages of wise compromise. An instructive contrast between negative and positive attitudes can be illustrated by, on the one hand, a look at the way the Czarist court and the Russian aristocracy behaved just prior to the Russian revolution and, on the other hand, a look at the policies adopted by the British ruling classes towards the rise of labour power in Britain during the 19th and early 20th centuries. I do not here have to dwell at length on the fact that the more evidence of restlessness from below - evidence that took the form of terrorism, riots, protest marches and common talk of apocalypse in the cities of Czarist Russia - the more rigid and inflexible the Czarist autocracy became and the more it called upon the spiritual power of the orthodox church and the temporal power of the police and the spy system to bolster its authority and block even the mildest demands for change. As a result, when the changes did come they came in uncompromising forms, sweeping away Czardom and everything associated with it, building a society based on entirely different conceptions of humanity, of history, of economics and of statehood. Equally, one does not have to dwell at length on the fact that the English aristocracy is still alive, and if not necessarily kicking is certainly not being kicked. And this is because it took the sagacious course of concession and compromise, recognizing the forces that were being raised up from below and of working out a strategic set of adjustments to those forces - which meant that it gave up some privileges in order to keep others. A teacher can show how the British aristocracy allowed for power-sharing through the parliamentary system in order that it might keep some power to share and of course how, through the House of Lords, the patrician orders have absorbed some of the leaders of reform and made them, if not total members of the establishment, at least willing agents of compromise. A teacher could then leap across the Atlantic and show how the Canadian Confederation has survived on the art

of compromise and how classes within the Confederation have worked out accommodations on social issues thereby preserving the peace, or relative peace, of Canadian society.

All of this of course leads on to another fundamental aspect of history teaching. The aim is not just consciousness of the order of things around one, but self-consciousness as well. That particular aim can be approached through a study of attitudes, both the freezing of attitudes and the changing of attitudes. For example: if a teacher wants to analyse the phenomenon of apartheid in South Africa, it might be useful to begin not with South Africa but with two other areas of the world, and then to work backwards to apartheid. If a teacher got students to look at some of the ideological justifications for black slavery in the United States or the Caribbean, this would set apartheid in context. The most fundamental assumption on which the institution of slavery was built in both those areas was that black peoples were of a different and lower order of being from white ones, and that whenever the two races came into contact the inferior status of the one required the political and social exercise of the superior status of the other, or destruction would result for both. But when slavery was abolished, particularly in the Caribbean, the blacks of that area who got the same kind of education as the whites gave the total lie to that assumption by their sophistication, their proficiency in all fields, the spaciousness of their mental outlook and their ingenuity. The same thing happened of course in the United States, but because the practices of slavery continued after the institution was legally abolished, it took longer for these phenomena to become clear.

Then the teacher can go back to South Africa, and point out that the basis on which apartheid is built is the belief that God created blacks and whites to be different orders of beings and that the safety of Christian civilization in southern Africa depends upon white tutelage of the blacks, who can only gradually be brought to a pitch of living that may be called civilized, but can never be brought to a height of being which can be called equal to that of the whites.

But the teacher can make the issue broader than just the relationships between black and white. For instance: the

student's attention could be focused on the attitude of the English ruling classes to the Irish in the late 19th century. The former described the latter as lazy, shiftless, incapable of productivity but capable of much reproduction, unambitious, explosive, drunken, full of romantic illusions about power - in short, needing English, protestant overlordship, first to keep their society from degenerating into mires of inertia or of violence, and secondly to discipline them enough to bring them into the modern world. The teacher can then point out how these perjorative assessments of the Irish are sometimes made by people of Irish descent - now well educated, comfortable and living in other parts of the world - about the poor of Africa and Central America.

In fact, a teacher could point out how these exact stereotypes were not simply used by the English protestant ascendancy about the Irish, but were often used by the upper middle classes of England in the early nineteenth century to describe the victims of the industrial revolution. And a modern parallel to that, of course, is the stereotype held by the ruling elites of some Central and Latin American countries about the peons and the peasants, particularly if they are of Indian extraction.

The way stereotypes can suddenly do a complete change around can give a teacher and a class tremendous fun. One example of that is the widely publicized stereotypes of the Chinese people before and after Richard Nixon's visit to China in the early 70's. A teacher can point out that before the presidential visit, the Chinese were usually described as "the yellow peril". Certain demonic attributes were ascribed to them, and they were seen as a threat to the freedom-loving West and to the future of humanity as a whole. One description that is particularly interesting went like this:

Indoctrinated from the tips of their heads
to the tips of their toes, they swarm over
the country chanting diabolically the fatuities
of their God Mao Tse Tung, and ready for any
holocaust.

Then the president went to China and the visit was a diplomatic success. Suddenly, the Chinese became a porcelain people, possessed of an ancient, dignified and subtle civilization; a people with a sense of sturdy realism who had done remarkable things in sorting out the equations between food and population; certainly, a people with a facility for understanding the realities of international affairs.

A teacher who uses this and other similar examples, is really using history for purposes of self-examination. Stereotypes simplify and perjorative stereotypes simplify dangerously. And stereotypes are often used to justify cruel and lethal behaviour, as in the case of the Nazis and the Jews. What a teacher can really do in this area is to show how stereotypes and power are closely related and the change in the latter can often produce 360 degree changes in the former. And the changes are there to be found. There are Protestant stereotypes against Catholics, Gentile stereotypes against Jews, Caucasian stereotypes against Asians, Chinese stereotypes against Japanese, European stereotypes against Africans and the stereotypes of North American Indians still current among some people in this continent, Francophone stereotypes against Anglophones - and the other way around. All of these are grist for the mill of a teacher who sees history as partly the exploration of self consciousness.

Earlier, I mentioned the subject of power and stereotypes: but there is another aspect to it, the relationship between power and culture. That, too, can provide a teacher with fertile soil for stimulating historical inquiry. For instance, the assumption that tremendous military and industrial power in a given nation means that its culture has more value in human terms than the cultures of militarily and economically weaker societies has been pervasive in modern, medieval and ancient history. Teachers could point out how when the British reached the climax of the Pax Britannica, they assumed that providence, or God, had singled them out for a special role. That role was to bring the rest of mankind, if not necessarily under their territorial jurisdiction, certainly under their cultural tutelage. In short, the wielders of great power became school

masters of the world, and usually expect the other portions of mankind to become facsimilies of themselves. That, a teacher can indicate, is not just for their own self-esteem but also a guarantee that their power will continue. True of the British in the 19th and early 20th century, it has been true of the Russians as they spread their empire across Central Asia; it has been true of the French in their rule of Indo-China and parts of Africa; it is also, of course, fundamentally true of Americans - the "coca-colonization" of the world as it has been called by some mischievous critic. But a good history teacher will lead students to realize that this phenomenon is not unique to Americans but is an old principle of human behaviour, written into the exercise of power wherever it expresses itself. As, for instance, in the relations between Spain and its empire; the Portugese and their empire; the Chinese and their empire. This has other important ramifications as well, for it will open up the students' minds to the great debates going on in many parts of the world, between those who feel that the road to development lies through American culture and those who feel that that road must lie through indigenous cultures reactivated and revitalized. This can bring a teacher in Canada to the old debate between those who feel that Canadian culture is really American culture gone "Arctic" and those who feel that Canadian culture is spiritually distinct from that of the neighbour to the South - and healthily so.

In short, teachers can lead their students to understand that power attracts, and immense power attracts culturally. For example, the middle classes of Italy, France and the German speaking parts of Europe in the nineteenth century, mesmerized by the influence and power of Great Britain, shed their magnificently colourful style of clothing to imitate the sombre black suits of the British bourgeoisie and took to talking the language of horses and dogs as the ruling classes of Britain did.

Finally, still on the subject of power, a teacher can point out how great empires of countries of immense hegemony, flattered by the imitations of aliens, tend to think of themselves as - if not quite eternal - at least existing for the foreseeable future. Significantly, both the Spanish empires and the British empires were said to have a privileged rela-

tionship with the sun, because that luminary was required never to set upon both dominions. Incidentally, the relationship between sun and power can be demonstrated from the days of the Pharaohs who were the children of the sun to the Aztecs, to Louis XIV - the "Sun King" in France - and of course down to the two empires just mentioned. The examples of this kind of symbolic thinking are both numerous and obvious and need not detain us any longer. What is important, however, is that students be led to see how messianic is the impulse of great nations and, particularly, how super powers often operate on the assumption that it is their business to redeem other peoples from their inadequate ways of living and making a living, whilst imposing upon them both their power and their leadership. That, of course, can be linked to the myth of the messiah mentioned earlier and the theme can be cumulatively developed so that students over a period of years come to recognize how fundamental is the messianic impulse.

I mentioned earlier that we are moving into a multi-polar world and away from a bi-polar one, and that shifts of gravity, political and economic, are taking place to such an extent that in order to make the globe habitable it is necessary to adopt a flexible and accomodating approach to the procedures of existence. Such changes of attitude are never easy. As every teacher will be able to point out, the nation state has become so entrenched a concept in the minds of people across the world that they frequently regard surrendering some of its sovereign attributes in the interests of peaceful survival as an equivalent to the cutting off of an individual's limbs. Yet, in previous periods when the world seemed limited by encrusted formulations of thought, people have broken out of them impelled by self-interest, economic instincts, and their own desire to occupy greater space. In this connection the teacher can advert to the mental attitudes which made possible the great age of European exploration in the 15th and 16th centuries - the era of Prince Henry the navigator, Vasco da Gama, Columbus and Magellan. Previous to that age geography was theology expressed in maps, dogmatic and apparently immutable. Then some men began to realise that dogma was robbing them of both distance and opportunity and they began to break out of their constricting world to make new maps and

journeys of exploration. . It is important for teachers to point out that these movements first took place in the minds of Europeans before they actually took place on the maps or in the ships; and that revolutions of outlook are possible when people feel that they have more to gain than to lose by change. That is to say that their economic well being, that their sense of discovery and that their intellectual curiosity will be more satisfied by change than by the status quo. That kind of teaching may make some students look at the world from a larger perspective than simply national ones. That is, perhaps, one of the most crucial contributions that good history teaching can make to the survival of the world we know and to the reshaping of another one.

It is in this sense and for these reasons that I find it difficult to conceive of history as a thing of the past. All that I have said above does not necessarily call for fundamental changes of curriculum. What it does call for perhaps is changes of methodology in the teaching of the subject. Greater use of analogy, more flexibility in the way themes are handled and, on the part of teachers, a more holistic approach to the study of history which transcends the conventional limitations that have been imposed on the discipline.

Dr. Robert Moore

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